



Supports for Programs, Administrators, Educators, and Parents

Exceed is the name for Rhode Island's cross departmental initiative to implement the work of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant. The name conveys the commitment of all those in our state's early learning community who are working to help ensure that all of our young children have the opportunity to soar. Exceed is striving to reach key goals in the strategic plan of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council.

The Exceed website (exceed.ri.gov) was designed as a resource for programs, families, and professionals seeking additional information about the field of early care and education in Rhode Island.

To support programs and educators in their quest for continuous improvement toward this ambitious but achievable goal, the following supports are available:

For Programs:

Program Quality Improvement Grants

The state recognizes that to achieve high-quality, programs need high-quality materials and equipment to ensure the health and safety of children and to promote their growth and development across all the domains of early learning, including motor development, social and emotional development, language development, and cognitive development. Programs also need resources to support staff professional development, curriculum planning, child assessment, and family engagement. To access program quality improvement grants, the first step is to apply for a BrightStars rating.

Program Quality Awards

Early learning programs that meet higher quality standards usually have higher program operating costs. These higher costs are primarily associated with increased staff compensation and benefits to attract and retain more qualified teachers and expanded staffing to cover staff time for curriculum planning, individual child observation and assessment, and family engagement activities. Child care programs serving low and moderate income families struggle to secure adequate resources to meet recommended program quality standards. Because of increased staffing needs, programs that serve infants and toddlers face significant challenges in achieving quality standards with resources currently available. It is clear that providing targeted, on-going financial support would help programs achieve and sustain higher quality levels. The Department of Human Services provides Quality Awards to programs that meet eligibility criteria to off-set increased operating costs for programs operating at higher quality levels.



For programs that meet the 10% CCAP enrollment threshold, awards will be calculated based on the program's BrightStars rating, the overall enrollment of children under age 6, and the number of CCAP infants and toddlers. Quality Awards must be spent to support direct costs of the early childhood program and cannot be taken as profit or applied to agency overhead. Quality Awards can be used to provide enhanced compensation and/or benefits to staff who meet qualifications outlined in BrightStars, support expanded staffing needed to meet higher quality standards (supplemental staff, expanded hours for assistants, etc.), and/or to pay on-going costs associated with meeting higher quality standards (e.g., individual child assessment system).

Additional questions regarding Quality Awards may be directed to Colleen Masterson at the RI Department of Human Services at (401)462-6868 or Colleen.Masterson@dhs.ri.gov.

Child Care & Early Learning Facilities Fund

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) serves as the vendor for the Early Learning Facilities Project, a project funded by the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant. Under this project, LISC will deliver enhanced training and technical assistance to support public schools and preschools along with traditional community-based child care facilities. LISC administers a grant pool designed to provide resources that assist child care centers serving high need populations with their facility issues. The work of the Early Learning Facilities Project will be closely aligned with the existing Child Care Facilities Fund work. LISC provides a combination of training, technical assistance and flexible, affordable financing for a wide range of projects including minor renovations or construction of a new, state-of-the-art child care facility

For more information about the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund, call (401)331.0131 or e-mail riccff@lisc.org.

Teaching Strategies GOLD State Rate

RIDE offers support to programs that are interested in implementing Teaching Strategies GOLD, by providing the opportunity to purchase child subscriptions at the state rate. This rate is half the cost of the regular subscription, allowing more programs to purchase and implement a high-quality child assessment system. Programs are required to provide evidence of their capacity to implement the system, ensure their teachers will receive training and use the system with fidelity, and share student data so that RIDE can use it to inform decisions around professional development and assessment policies.

For more information on this resource, please contact Holly Ayotte at (401)222-2117 or Holly.Ayotte@ride.ri.gov



State Pre-K Funding

RIDE annually grants RI School Funding Formula funds to eligible early learning organizations including child care centers, school districts or Head Start organizations which demonstrate their capacity to implement the state high-quality Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program for four year olds. Pre-K funds support the enrollment of four year olds in high quality state Pre-K program classrooms which meet all RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Standards for Preschool and are approved by the RI Department of Education. To apply for funds, programs in eligible communities must demonstrate their capacity to meet the standards set by participating in a competitive bid process usually held in April or May of each year.

For more information on the state Pre-K program, please contact Kristen Greene at (401)222 – 8168 or Kristen.Greene@ride.ri.gov

Information Line

The Center for Early Learning Professionals manages an InfoLine, which is a resource to assist early learning programs and professionals to improve quality by answering questions and accessing resources related to best practice in the field of early childhood. Individuals with questions are encouraged to call the InfoLine; visit exceed.ri.gov to access the InfoLine.

For Administrators and Educators:

Workforce Knowledge and Competencies

The Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators articulate the essential skills and knowledge that educators who work with young children need to know, understand, and be able to do to promote young children's healthy development and learning. They are designed for many purposes including, but not limited to: 1) supporting an educator's individual professional development efforts; 2) helping program administrators articulate educator job expectations and design evaluation processes for staff; and 3) guiding higher education and professional development providers on the creation of curricula for college courses and educator training offered in the community. Available now are the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Teachers/Teacher Assistants, an addendum for Special Educators and Family Child Care. Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Administrators and Education Coordinators are currently under development. To access the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies visit <https://exceed.ri.gov/Pages/Professionals>.

For more information on this resource, please contact Sara Mickelson at (401)222 –8460 or Sara.Mickelson@ride.ri.gov.



Access to Formal Credentials

Ready to Learn Providence is the home of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Rhode Island. The T.E.A.C.H. project pays 80-90% of tuition and book costs to early childhood professionals who wish to pursue ECE coursework, or an AA or BA/BS degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. Additional support including release time and bonus pay is also available. Center or home care sponsorship, as well as some cost sharing, is required, however, program quality improvement grants may be used to cover this cost.

For more information about T.E.A.C.H contact Maura Pearce at (401)490-9960 ext. 229 or mpearce@provplan.org.

CCRI's Rhode Island Early Childhood Education and Training Program is providing multiple opportunities for up to 280 child care providers annually to receive formal early childhood coursework at little or no financial cost. CCRI's Early Childhood Education & Training Program offers students the opportunity to earn 12 college credits in ECE through a combination of formal coursework and intensive mentoring, which is aligned with Level I of the Teacher and Teacher Assistant Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC).

For more information about CCRI's Rhode Island Early Childhood Education and Training Program, contact Lynne Trudel at (401)455-6128 or ltrudel@ccri.edu.

Rhode Island College (RIC) has designed the Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning to provide opportunities and pathways for individuals currently working in the field of early childhood education to complete their bachelor's degree in one of two areas of study: Early Childhood Learning (PreK-2 certification) or Early Childhood Education Concentration Birth-5. This program has been developed as a hybrid model to meet the needs of working adult learners by combining face-to-face learning and flexible online content components.

For more information about RIC's Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning, contact Dr. Susan Zoll at (401) 456-8414 or szoll@ric.edu.

The Office of Adult Education at the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has contracted for a pilot program to provide English as a second language (ESL) and adult basic education instruction with wrap around support services. The pilot is offered in Providence, with day and times that are convenient for the early care and education workforce.

For more information about this pilot, contact Deborah Anthes at (401) 462-6842 or Deborah.Anthes@dhs.ri.gov

Access to Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Center for Early Learning Professionals provides a continuum of learning opportunities to prepare adults to work with young children and their families in all settings and sectors, and includes



the learning opportunities that enhance and improve one's skills as a professional over time. The Center for Early Learning Professionals will provide professional development opportunities aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC) frameworks, individualized technical assistance, and award program quality improvement grants to support programs and individuals progress on the path toward high-quality.

This project is led by the Education Development Corporation in collaboration with Ready to Learn Providence. *Additional questions regarding the Center for Early Learning Professionals can be directed to (401)736-9020.*

Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) Professional Development

Early learning standards articulate shared expectations for what young children should know and be able to do. Further, they provide a common language for measuring progress toward achieving specific learning goals (Kendall, 2003; Kagan & Scott-Little, 2004); *Charting a Course for Success in the Ocean State: Rhode Island's Early Learning and Development Standards* outlines early learning expectations at key benchmarks, from birth to 60 months of age.

Rhode Island is unique in its investment in high-quality standards-based trainings. Rhode Island has dedicated significant resources to creating a series of professional development trainings which support early childhood professionals in their various roles in understanding how to create effective learning experiences for young children. Delivery of these trainings occurs throughout the year, across the state and in various community settings.

The Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) project provides four professional development opportunities to support early care and education professionals in creating high-quality, standards-based programs for young children. Professional development participants receive training from experienced RIELDS certified trainers, work in small and large groups, share information, reflect on past and current practice, and complete assignments that lead to improved early childhood programs and effective teacher practices.

The RIELDS professional development opportunities include:

- Foundations for Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (Foundations)
- Developing a Curriculum Framework (Curriculum)
- Implementing a Standards-based Classroom (Classroom)
- Implementing a Standards-based Program (Program)
- Next Steps sessions

For more information on this opportunity, visit the [RIDE website](#) or contact Elaine Remillard at (401)222-2118 or Elaine.Remillard@ride.ri.gov.



Supporting Effective Child Assessment

RIDE is working with the Education Development Center to design and provide professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to support the implementation of developmentally appropriate and comprehensive child assessment practices. The professional development opportunities will be aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competency frameworks and will address the different purposes and uses of child assessment information at a program level; selecting assessment systems and approaches that are appropriate for target populations and purposes; interpreting and understanding classroom quality measures and using that information to improve classroom quality; supporting effective, formative child assessment practices in classrooms; and using appropriate authentic assessment strategies and planning for ongoing classroom assessment.

For more information on this resource, please contact Judi Stevenson-Garcia at (401)222-8176 or Judi.Stevenson-Garcia@ride.ri.gov

For Families:

Parent Guide

The Parent Guide has been developed to provide an overview of the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards for families. The brochure consists for information on why standards are important, how standards can be used by families, as well as helpful information and resources related to standards-based early care and education programs. The Parent Guide can be found in English and Spanish online. Visit families page at exceed.ri.gov for more information.

Family Fun Activities

Fun Family Activity Cards

The Fun Family Activity cards have been developed to provide information and enjoyable ways to support the learning and development of your child. The cards can be printed and used by families with children birth through 60 months. Each of the activities has been built off the Early Learning and Development Standards and aim to provide parents fun ideas for how they can support skills that are important for later school readiness. Visit families page at exceed.ri.gov for more information.

Fun Family Activity Trainings

For those looking for additional information on the Fun Family Activity cards and to connect with other families on the use of the cards should consider attending the Fun Family Activity Cards Trainings. The free training series is based on the knowledge that parents and caregivers have a critical role in preparing children for school success. The content of the training builds upon research and best practice in both early childhood development and parenting and our understanding that children learn best through play.



As a result of participation in this training, families will discover how to support their child's growth and development through play-based activities which are easy to do at home, in the car, or while running errands. Specific topics covered include the nine areas of learning addressed in the RI Early Learning and Development Standards, in addition to specific activities that reflect each family's unique background and investment in their child's education. Participants engage in a variety of activities utilizing materials and resources that are low cost and accessible and are encouraged to replicate the activities with their own child when they return home. Participants then spend time individualizing a Scrapbook by creating additional activity cards that represent their own child's development, interests, and learning styles, collecting pictures, drawings, and more completed through Home Play during the training.

Visit families page at exceed.ri.gov for more information or contact the Rhode Island Parent Information Network by calling (401)270-0101 ext. 107.

Increased Access to Developmental Screens

For children ages birth to three

The Rhode Island Department of Education and The Rhode Island Department of Health are working together to support primary care providers to conduct developmental screening for children ages birth to three using standardized tools and follow up to this screening. This work includes providing support to primary care providers to implement electronic systems of standardized developmental screening to identify the needs of the patients and their families in care. Primary care providers will also be supported to provide resources to meet the needs of their patients as identified through screening. Primary care providers can apply for funding for evidence-based interventions which would be made available to meet the needs of for those children and families who may not qualify for other services.

For more information on this opportunity, visit [http://www.health.ri.gov/](http://www.health.ri.gov) or contact Stacey Aguiar at stacey.aguiar@health.ri.gov.

For children ages three to five

Child Outreach is a FREE service offered to ALL children 3 to 5 years old by your local school district in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education. Child Outreach provides information about children's development and resources that are available within the community. Child Outreach can help identify children who may need further assessment, intervention, and/or services at an early age in order to prevent the occurrence of more severe problems later.

To access this support, families can schedule a screening appointment at any time during the school year by calling their local school district and asking to speak with the Child Outreach Coordinator.

Visit the families page at exceed.ri.gov or contact Ruth Gallucci at Ruth.Gallucci@ride.ri.gov for additional information.